
Indiana Curriculum Standards

K.1.1, K.3.6, .1.1.1, 1.1.2, 2.1.2, 3.1.2, 4.1.15, 4.3.8, 4.3.9

Grade level: K-4

Supplies:

Lifestyle comparison – Then and Now

Objectives:

- Students will compare the lifestyle of the 1800s to their own lifestyle.
- Students will realize that their lives are physically easier than those of the children in the past.
- Students will be aware of the style of life of pioneer Americans in the 1800s.

Background:

Homes were built of hewn logs with a roof of boards and dirt or puncheon floors (hewn logs) and were chinked with either clay or a mixture of moss and mud. In the earliest construction, wooden pegs were used in place of nails. A large fireplace was built at one end of the cabin and was often used for cooking. Cabins often consisted of a single open room for living, cooking, and sleeping. The older children in the family often used a loft area as sleeping areas. Pine torches were used for light, later on candles and lanterns were used.

Early furniture, often made by the men during the winter months, was crude. A typical cabin was furnished with a home-made bed or two, a table, and chairs. Early beds were mattresses on the floor. Later on, poles were attached to the wall to form a bedframe. As skills increased, freestanding bedframes were built and strung with rope or platted hickory withes to support the mattress. The first mattresses were cloth sacks filled with broomsage later when farming became more widespread women plucked chickens, ducks, and geese for feathers to fill mattresses called ticks and pillows. The first chairs were simple stools (blocks of wood with legs pegged into them) later on as skill levels increased and more tools were available chairs became more refined and were built with cane bottoms. Spoons and other utensils and bowls were fashioned from wood. Baskets were often woven from native bark. Gourds were dried to use as dippers or storage containers. Walls were often ornamented with red peppers and other dried vegetables and fruits, and wild turkey feathers.

The pioneer women made most of the family's clothes by hand. Men's everyday clothes were made from flax due to the strength of the material. Skins of deer and other animals were used to make trousers and moccasins. Yarn was spun for all of the other clothes. Shoes were made from tanned hides. Women made soap and candles from animal fat. Most women were very skilled in quilting which was often a social event where women gathered and helped each other complete quilts. Sometimes these quilting bees were held while the men helped each other clear land or do other chores. These "workings" were often followed by a party where neighbors could continue to socialize.

The early settlers' diet mainly consisted of wild game meat, fish and bread. Corn bread and bacon were also a staple foods along with milk and butter. Beans, molasses, cabbage, turnips, onions, greens, berries and fruits made up the summer diet. Fruits, which grew in the area, included crabapples, plums, cherries, grapes, huckleberries, and blackberries. In winter, people ate dried beans (called shucky beans or leatherbritches), molasses, dried pumpkin, turnips, dried fruits and sauerkraut. Cornmeal was often hand ground. After the population increased, enterprising men started water-powered mills. Settlers would carry their corn and wheat to the mill either on foot or by horseback and spend a day getting the meal and flour for the family. Sugar was very scarce and was one of the main items bought by the family along with coffee. Trees were often tapped for their sugar water. Honey was gathered and cane was grown to be made into molasses, which were also used, as sweeteners.

In hard times, the settlers used local herbs such as chicory or parched bran as coffee substitutes. Salt was obtained at the forks of the Little Pigeon Creek and other creeks and rivers in the area. Early settler's traded dried fruits, vegetables, and herbs, including ginseng for necessary goods. The early settlers did not farm much but relied on hunting and fishing to provide most of

their food. After land was cleared, corn became the staple crop, however, wheat, oats, flax, potatoes, cabbage and parsnips were also grown. Livestock usually consisted of a cow, a horse or work oxen, a few hogs and chickens, and enough sheep to provide wool for the family's clothes. Fish was plentiful in the many rivers and creeks that covered the area. Hogs were usually turned out to eat the mast from the vast forests in the area.

Farm tools were very primitive and usually consisted of whip saws, pole axes, broad-axes, hoes and rakes made of either wood or metal, spades, mattocks, and plows. Oats and wheat were cut with a reaper or scythe. Sometimes there was a crosscut saw in the neighborhood.

Setting the Stage:

1. Pioneers of the 1800s lived a very different lifestyle than we do today.
2. Pioneer lifestyle was difficult and full of hard work.
1. What are the differences between pioneer life in the 1800s and life today?
2. What are the similarities between pioneer life and life today?

Instructions:

Activity 1: Lead student discussion or have them list activities their family does in the fall to prepare for winter. Examples: remove and store air conditioners, check the furnace, winterize cars, buy winter clothes.

Activity 2: Research one farm product from planting to harvesting. What steps are taken and when?

Activity 3: Prepare a bulletin board or collage depicting life on a modern farm. Ask students to predict the items that may not be on an 1820s farm.

Activity 4: Brainstorm aspects of Lincoln's life and their life. Discuss the following items and add some of your own: games, books, house, chores, clothes, roads, transportation, communication, hobbies and school. Pair up your children and assign a different topic to each team. One member draws and/or writes the modern version of these topics while the other member draws and/or writes the pioneer version.

Ask the students to either agree or disagree with the following statements, which will

help them to make connections and develop an interest in the topic:

- Children of pioneer families usually had their own bedrooms.
- Cabins were built of logs because they needed to use the resources available in the environment.
- Pioneers used electricity to heat their homes during winter months.
- Pioneers developed the technology of indoor plumbing.
- Pioneers would get water for cooking, taking a bath, or cleaning from a well, spring, or other natural water source.
- Pioneers used outhouses instead of indoor bathrooms.
- Log cabins are out of style and never built for dwellings today.

Vocabulary

Pioneer – One of the first to settle in a territory

Outhouse – an outbuilding (for using the restroom)

Math Story Problems:

The Lincoln family has 15 chickens. If they eat one a week for 5 weeks in a row, how many will they have on the sixth week?

The Lincoln family has 10 chickens. Of the 10 chickens, 5 are hens (females that lay eggs). If each of the 5 hens lay 2 eggs a day for seven days, how many eggs will the Lincoln family have? _____

Mr. Lincoln can plow 1 acre of field in one hour with the horse named Jack. He can plow 2 acres of the field in one hour with the horse named Sophie. How many acres can Mr. Lincoln plow with the horse named Sophie if he has 3 hours to plow? _____

Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln have 5 children. Two are boys. How many of the children are girls? _____

Additional Activities

- Create an art project by gluing pretzel sticks inside of a log cabin outline.
- Play games that pioneer children probably did, i.e. jump rope, hide-and-seek.